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Realism and prophecy in Machiavelli and in Italian political culture

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ABSTRACT

That Niccolò Machiavelli was a realist political theorist is perhaps one of the few claims on which scholars agree almost unanimously. The truth, however, is that his writings exhibit a blend of political realism and prophetic spirit. By *realism* I mean his belief that before any normative discussion on how human beings should behave in political life, we must properly understand how they behave in reality. By *prophetic spirit* I refer not only to the presence in his writings of prophecies concerning the future of Italy, but also to his condemnations of the corrupt morals and religion of his time and his indications of the path to moral and political redemption, which echo the Old Testament prophets. Of the two sides of Machiavelli's legacy – realism and prophecy – the second has surely helped the cause of Italian liberty more than the first. When Italians have interpreted Machiavelli as a pure realist, they have lost their liberty and have plunged into political and moral corruption. The purpose of this paper is to defend these claims.

SOMMARIO

Fra gli studiosi, l'affermazione che Niccolò Machiavelli è un teorico politico realista è probabilmente la più unanime. La verità, però, è che i suoi scritti sono contrassegnati da una combinazione di realismo politico e spirito profetico. Per *realismo*, intendo la convinzione che prima di una discussione normativa su come gli esseri umani dovrebbero comportarsi nella vita politica, dobbiamo capire sufficientemente come si comportano in realtà. Per *spirito profetico*, intendo non solo la presenza negli scritti di profezie sul futuro dell'Italia, ma anche la presenza di una condanna della corruzione morale e religiosa dell'epoca, insieme alle indicazioni di un percorso lungo il sentiero della redenzione morale e politica che risuonano i profeti del Vecchio Testamento. Delle due facce dell'eredità di Machiavelli – realismo e profezia – la seconda aiutò la causa della libertà italiana più della prima. Lo scopo di questo saggio è di difendere queste tesi.

KEYWORDS
Machiavelli; political realism; prophecy; Savonarola; Risorgimento; Mussolini

PAROLE CHIAVE
Machiavelli; realismo politico; profezia; Savonarola; Risorgimento; Mussolini

That Niccolò Machiavelli was a realist political theorist is perhaps one of the few claims on which scholars agree almost unanimously.[1] The truth, however, is that his writings exhibit

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a blend of political realism and prophetic spirit. By *realism* I mean his belief that before any normative discussion on how human beings should behave in political life, we must properly understand how they behave in reality. By *prophetic spirit* I refer not only to the presence in his writings of prophecies concerning the future of Italy, but also to his condemnations of the corrupt morals and religion of his time and his indications of the path to moral and political redemption, which echo the Old Testament prophets.[2] Of the two sides of Machiavelli's legacy – realism and prophecy – the second has surely helped the cause of Italian liberty more than the first. The purpose of this paper is to defend these claims.

Machiavelli's realism

The main evidence for Machiavelli's realism is doubtless the famous line from Chapter XV of *Il Principe*, where he asserts his intention to study the 'verità effettuale della cosa', rather than 'republiche e principati che non si sono mai visti né conosciuti in vero essere'.[3] Political reality must be grasped; one cannot just rely on political imagination. Yet the distinctive point of Machiavelli's realism is his awareness that political reality is extremely difficult to grasp and only a refined work of interpretation can unveil it and, even then, only in part, and tentatively. Machiavelli's realism is different from the realism of the empirical scientist who collects precise facts and identifies general laws. Even less can it be compared to the approach of the political amateur who believes that general models of political behaviour might help us to understand real political life. His method of investigating political reality was primarily interpretive and relied on historical narrations and the analysis of human passions.

For Machiavelli, political reality – or, more precisely, the type of political reality he is interested in understanding – consists in the reasons behind the actions of princes and peoples.[4] This means that it is not made of a set of visible and measurable facts. Princes, moreover, are masters in the art of covering and colouring their true intentions. He does not want to be deceived by appearances. An eloquent document of his mindset is the letter to Francesco Vettori of 29 April 1513, which states 'io non beo paesi, né voglio in queste cose mi muova nessuna autorità sanza ragione' – meaning that he does not want to be fooled by princes' declarations but to judge their actions by their effective intentions.[5] Another illuminating text comes in Chapter XVIII of *Il Principe*: 'li uomini in universali iudicano più alli occhi che alle mani':[6] meaning that to judge by appearances is to fail to grasp the truth of the matter, whereas only a few wise men have the 'touch' (*sentire*) that enables them to evaluate political affairs.

Machiavelli wants to know what princes mean to do before the event; and, after the event, why they did what they did. His method relies on two general assumptions: the first that over history the same passions guide the conduct of human beings, princes included;[7] the second that each individual has his or her set of prevailing passions and beliefs. One is possessed by the desire for glory, another by hatred, another by desire for revenge, another by lust for money, another still by fear of losing his territory or his power.[8]

From these assumptions it follows that we can claim to understand political life only if we have a clear notion of how passions operate in general, and if we know the passions and the beliefs behind particular princes' and rulers' conduct at a given time. As Felix

Gilbert stressed in a masterful essay of 1957, in Machiavelli's time no such a thing as a scientific method to investigate political events existed.[9] To explain and predict political events, Florentine rulers and citizens relied on observations about the character of political leaders, combined with general ideas about human nature, often couched in popular proverbs and sayings. For Machiavelli it is utterly unwise, for instance, to expect that a prince who is afraid to lose his power would act like a prince who has the confidence to expand his dominions by conquest; or that a prince who hates other princes or is consumed by envy or by the desire to avenge himself would behave like a prince who trusts his subjects and other princes and entertains no plans for revenge.

An eloquent example of Machiavelli's method of deciphering princes' intentions by identifying the geography of their passions comes in his letter to Francesco Vettori of 26 August 1513, where he writes:

> E quanto allo stato delle cose del mondo io ne traggo questa conclusione: che noi siamo governati da così fatti principi, che hanno, o per natura o per accidente, queste qualità: noi abbiamo un papa savio, e per questo grave e rispettivo; uno imperadore instabile e vario; un re di Francia sdegnoso e pauroso; un re di Spagna taccagno e avaro; un re di Inghilterra ricco, feroce e cupido di gloria; e svizzeri, bestiali, vittoriosi et insolenti; noi altri di Italia poveri ambiziosi e vili.[10]

In another letter, Machiavelli substantiates his interpretation of the international political scene by identifying the beliefs that underlie the ruling passions of the various kings and princes.

> Io credo che la cagione perché Inghilterra si rimpiastrassi con Francia fussi per vendicarsi contro la Spagna delle iniurie fattegli nella guerra di Francia: el quale sdegno è suto ragionevole, né veggo cosa che possa presto cancellare questo e spegnere l'amore della affinità contratta intra quelli dua re, né mi muove l'antica inimicizia delli inghilesi e franzesi che muove molti: perché e populi vogliono quello che e re, et non e re quello ch'e populi.[11]

An indispensable aid for understanding princes' reasons for acting comes from history. Machiavelli, like the humanists of his time, firmly believed that narratives of historical events and political deliberations, as well as descriptions of the lives and characters of political leaders, could shed light on political life, if we are wise enough to draw the right analogies between past and present events and individuals. When the *signoria* of Florence sent Machiavelli to the court of Cesare Borgia, with instructions to try to decipher his intentions, he asked his deputy in the Florentine Chancery, Biagio Buonaccorsi, quickly to find and send him a copy of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, in the hope he might find some clues in the stories of the lives of ancient statesmen and captains.[12]

Machiavelli has confidence he has understood present times when he recognizes in the behaviour of princes or peoples some features of the events that historians report happened in the past in comparable circumstances and with analogous protagonists. On a possible expansion of the Swiss into Northern Italy, for instance, he writes:

> Né si maravigli veruno che non abbino preso Milano apparentemente, e non abbino proceduto piú oltre che potevono: perché el modo del governo loro, come egli è disforme in casa alli altri, cosí è disforme fuora; et ha per riscontro tutte le istorie antiche: perché se infino a qui e' si hanno fatto compagni, per lo avvenire si faranno raccomandati e censuarii, non si curando di comandarli, né di maneggiarli particularmente, ma solo basta che li

> stieno per loro nelle guerre e che paghino loro l'annuale pensione; le quali cose si manterranno con la reputazione dell'arme di casa e con el gastigare chi deviassi da questo.[13]

With the aid of history and his assessments of princes' passions, Machiavelli proceeds to identify the reasons behind their actions.

The best example of Machiavelli's method applied to a specific political issue is his discussion with Vettori in the summer of 1513 regarding the truce that Ferdinand of Aragon, King of Spain, had signed with the King of France that April. For Vettori, Ferdinand's decision appears utterly inexplicable and yet he is convinced the King must have agreed to the truce for a reason: 'Noi abbiamo a pensare che ciascuno di questi nostri principi abbi un fine, e perché a noi è impossibile sapere il segreto loro, bisogna che lo stimiamo dalle parole, dalle dimostrazioni, e qualche parte ne immaginiamo'.[14] Machiavelli accepts Vettori's premise and responds to his intellectual challenge by attributing to the King the belief that one of the most effective ways for a new prince to preserve his power is to enhance his reputation with his subjects. Guided by this supposition, Machiavelli explains, Ferdinando's terribly risky choice nonetheless makes perfect sense because his goal 'non è tanto questo o quello o quella vittoria, quanto è darsi reputazione ne' populi'.[15]

What empirical evidence does Machiavelli offer to sustain his interpretation of the meaning of King Ferdinand's actions? None whatsoever. Certainly Ferdinand himself did not reveal to him the reasons behind his actions. Nor has Machiavelli compelling diplomatic documents or other written sources available. But he believes that his conjecture is better than the alternatives, *in primis* Vettori's view that the King's behaviour is utterly inexplicable, or that some fundamental pieces of information are missing. Machiavelli has formulated a conjecture by applying his interpretive method. He has not 'seen' the reasons that have inspired Ferdinand's conduct; he has imagined or surmised them. Later, in *Il Principe*, this conjecturing becomes one of his so-called laws of politics: 'Nessuna cosa fa tanto stimare uno principe quanto fanno le grandi imprese e dare di sé rari esempli'.[16] This law is inferred from a belief that Machiavelli himself has previously attributed to a prince, not from facts.

In other cases, Machiavelli reworks his recollections, years after the fact, and arrives at remarkably different interpretations of the meaning of what he saw based on his reflections on princely motivations. One clear example is his reflection on the brutal execution of Cesare Borgia's lieutenant, Ramiro d'Orco, in December 1502 at Cesena. Machiavelli witnessed the episode and reported it to the Florentine government as follows:

> Messer Rimirro questa mattina è stato trovato in dua pezi in su la piaza dove è ancora; et tucto questo populo lo ha possuto vedere; non si sa bene la cagione della sua morte, se non che li è piaciuto così al principe, el quale mostra di sapere fare et disfare li uomini ad sua posta, secondo e' meriti loro.[17]

Ten years later, in *Il Principe*, Machiavelli gives a very different interpretation of the same event. This time he does not claim that the Duke staged the execution the way he did to show his power to 'make and unmake men at his will', and to reward them 'according to their merits'. He remarks instead that the Duke's intention was to placate the hatred of the citizens of Cesena:

> E perché [Cesare Borgia] conosceva le rigorosità passate avergli generato qualche odio, per purgare li animi di quelli populi e guadagnarseli in tutto, volse mostrare che, se crudeltà alcuna era seguita, non era causata da lui ma da la acerba natura del ministro. E presa sopra a questo occasione, lo fece, a Cesena, una mattina mettere in dua pezzi in su la piazza, con uno pezzo di legne e uno coltello sanguinoso accanto: la ferocità del quale spettaculo fece quegli popoli in uno tempo rimanere satisfatti e stupidi.[18]

As Marc Bloch has taught us in his splendid *Apologie de l'histoire*, the historian always works with second-hand sources.[19] The same consideration applies to Machiavelli. The sources of his political reflections are histories, diplomatic dispatches, opinions from private conversations. Rarely are they facts that he has observed with his own eyes, with the sole exception of his dialogues with princes and diplomats. But this exception does not alter the general picture because, in most cases, Machiavelli works on what he remembers or on what he has written down after the conversations he has had or even after events that he has personally seen. Partial, uncertain, open to revisions and contestations, the knowledge of political reality that this interpretive method unveils is, for Machiavelli, the best available. For this style of thought, he surely belongs to the realist family, but in a special manner.

Along with his interpretive style of investigation, another central aspect of Machiavelli's realism is his concept of *riscontro*. As he explains in a letter of September 1506 to Giovan Battista Soderini, and again in the *Discorsi*, very different modes of action can lead to the same results, while identical modes of action can lead to opposite outcomes according to whether one 'fits' (*riscontra*) one's actions to the time.

> Quello è felice che riscontra el modo del procedere suo con el tempo, e quello, per opposito è infelice che si diversifica con le sua azione da el tempo e da l'ordine delle cose. Donde può molto bene essere che dua, diversamente operando, abbino uno medesimo fine, perché ciascuno di loro può conformarsi con el riscontro suo, perché e' sono tanti ordini di cose quanti sono province e stati.[20]

As a genuine realist, Machiavelli is aware that force is an essential component of political action, although it must be combined with prudence. He states this principle in one of his earliest political writings, the *Parole da dirle sopra la provisione del danaio*.

> Tucte le città, le quali mai per alcun tempo si son governate per principe soluto, per optimati, o per populo, come si governa questa, hanno auto per defensione loro le forze mescolate con la prudentia: perché questa non basta sola et quelle, o non conducono le cose, o conducte non le mantengano.[21]

Princes, and especially founders and redeemers, must be willing and able to use force against external and internal enemies. Prophets, however, must be capable of using force with their own followers,[22] as we shall see as I turn to examine his reflections on Savonarola and on prophecy in general.

Machiavelli's prophetic side

To my knowledge, scholars have dedicated very little attention to Machiavelli's considerations on prophecy and to the prophetic contents of his texts.[23] A notable recent exception is Miguel Vatter's essay 'Machiavelli, "Ancient Theology", and the Problem of Civic Religion', where the author claims that Machiavelli's beliefs on the

political role of religion are 'deeply marked by the rediscovery of a pre-Christian "ancient theology" as well as by the reception of Arabic and Jewish "prophetology"'.[24] While I do not find in Vatter's essay sufficient textual evidence to support his claim, I think that he is right to invite us to examine Florentine Neoplatonism as an essential context when seeking to identify the sources and the content of Machiavelli's ideas on prophecy. Vatter is also right when he claims that for Machiavelli 'the military and the prophetic' can and must be effectively conjoined by a prophet who is a giver of constitutional laws on the model of Moses.[25] The role of prophecy in Machiavelli's conception of the world and in his political philosophy remains, however, a largely unexplored terrain. What follows attempts to identify the fundamental aspects of Machiavelli's prophetic side, as I think it may be properly called.

The first trace worth considering comes in a letter of Filippo Casavecchia, a dear friend of Machiavelli, dated 17 June 1509. Casavecchia was surely poking fun at his correspondent when he wrote: 'Ogni in dì vi scopro el maggior profeta che avessin mai li ebrei o altra generazione'.[26] But Florentines often disguise truths as jokes, and it is worth noting that Casavecchia recognizes Machiavelli as a prophet because of his wisdom and his determination to challenge the mistaken beliefs of his fellow citizens.[27] The fact that Machiavelli later decided to show the manuscript of *Il Principe* to a friend who had called him a prophet is, perhaps, a relevant detail.

What is certainly relevant is that Machiavelli took prophecies and prophets very seriously. The best evidence can be found in his reflections on the prophet par excellence of his times, Girolamo Savonarola.[28] To be sure, his earliest comments on Savonarola indicate that he did not believe at all in Savonarola's pretension to divine inspiration. In a letter to Ricciardo Becchi, the ambassador of the Florence at the papal court, dated 9 March 1498, Machiavelli dissected Savonarola's sermons from a purely political perspective and concluded, somewhat irreverently, that Savonarola 'così, secondo el mio iudicio, viene secondando e tempi, et le sua bugie colorendo'.[29]

Even harsher, to the point of cruelty, are the words that Machiavelli dedicates to Savonarola, who had been executed in 1498, in the *Decennale primo*, a composition in verse which recounts the political and military events occurring in Italy between 1494 and 1504. The poem accuses Savonarola of having caused, with his eloquence, grave dissensions in Florence, and even suggests that the stake on which the body of the friar was burned was the only remedy possible to put an end to the city's divisions.[30] In *L'Asino*, an unfinished poem composed around 1517, he charges Savonarola – without naming him – with having preached the erroneous, and imprudent, doctrine that usury and carnal sins ('l'usura o qualche peccato carnale') are the worst evils that threaten republics and that the proper remedy to ensure their stability are 'digiuni, limosine, orazione'.[31] What really damages republics, Machiavelli retorts, is the mistaken belief that God's help is sufficient to save them and that all the citizens must do is to remain idle and pray.[32] Admittedly, in his splendid letter to Francesco Guicciardini of 17 May 1521, Machiavelli again mentions Savonarola and describes him as 'versuto', meaning that he was able to adapt his choices and his words to changing circumstances.[33] For Machiavelli, this sort of ability was a fine virtue in a prince but surely not a typical virtue of prophets.

It is in his major political works that Machiavelli discusses Savonarola and the power of prophecy at greatest length. In the summer of 1513, as he began to work on *Il Principe*,

Machiavelli approvingly recalled the words of Savonarola on the difficulty of establishing a lasting and fair peace.[34] Then, in the chapter 'De principatibus novis qui armis propriis et virtute acquiruntur' ('New Princedoms Gained Through One's own Arms and Virtue'; *Il Principe* VI), he compares Savonarola, his chief example of an unarmed prophet, with Moses, the counterpart for armed prophets. Savonarola was defeated, Machiavelli emphasizes, because the fluctuating convictions of the people can only be corralled into ideological unity through the use of force.[35] Machiavelli does not condemn Savonarola because he was, or pretended to be, a prophet; he merely remarks that, unlike Moses and the other religious founders, he had no way to resort to force. In fact, for Machiavelli, founders of new political orders, and to a greater extent the redeemers of oppressed peoples, need to have God as a friend if they want to win. As he writes in Chapter XXVI of *Il Principe*, the 'Exhortation to Liberate Italy from the Barbarians', the great founders and redeemers such as Moses, Cyrus, and Theseus all had God as a friend. And being a friend of God is the typical quality of true prophets.

In the *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli again contrasts Savonarola with Moses, and also compares him to Pier Soderini, the Chief Gonfalonier of the Republic of Florence who was forced to resign in 1512 by the supporters of the Medici backed by papal and Spanish troops. Moses, Machiavelli remarks, was able to accomplish his mission of redeeming the people of Israel from the Egyptian bondage and leading them to the promised land, because he had the courage to use violence and to order cruel measures.[36] Savonarola and Soderini, meanwhile, were both perfectly aware that the only way to defeat the enemies of popular government was to use extraordinary means against them. Yet, unlike Moses, both refused to use violence and, as a result, were defeated. Their motivations, however, were quite different:

> L'uno non potette vincerla [i.e. la invidia] per non avere autorità a poterlo fare (che fu il frate) e per non essere inteso bene da coloro che lo seguitavano, che ne arebbero avuto autorità. […] Quell'altro credeva col tempo, con la bontà, con la fortuna sua, col beneficare alcuno, spegnere questa invidia; vedendosi di assai fresca età, e con tanti nuovi favori che gli arrecava el modo del suo procedere, che credeva potere superare quelli tanti che per invidia se gli opponevano, sanza alcuno scandalo, violenza e tumulto: e non sapeva che il tempo non si può aspettare, la bontà non basta, la fortuna varia e la malignità non truova dono che la plachi.[37]

As Machiavelli writes in *Il Principe*, Savonarola did not have the authority to use violence. His political mistake was therefore much more excusable than Soderini's, who had the necessary authority and refused to use it because he lacked political wisdom and resolve. But, once again, Machiavelli does not dispute Savonarola's claims to prophecy; he laments that he was unarmed and unable to find armed supporters.

As was noted above, prophecy plays for Machiavelli a vital role in the foundation of new political orders.[38] And this includes Savonarola, whom Machiavelli places with almost the same status as the great legislators of antiquity. For my purpose, however, the point I must stress is that Machiavelli leaves open the question of whether Savonarola was truly inspired by God.

Another detail of decisive importance for my argument is Machiavelli's belief in the prophetic power of poetry to motivate political redeemers. In the *Florentine Histories* he recounts the conspiracy of the nobleman Stefano Porcari in Rome (1453).[39] Machiavelli

specifically emphasizes the encouragement Porcari took from certain lines of Petrarch's canzone 'Spirto gentil che quelle membra reggi' (*RVF* 53).

> Sapeva messere Stefano i poeti molte volte essere di spirito divino e profetico ripieni: tal che giudicava dovere ad ogni modo intervenire quella cosa che il Petrarca in quella canzona profetizzava, ed essere egli quello che dovessi essere di sì glorioso impresa esecutore.[40]

Porcari's bold undertaking failed. But while Machiavelli condemns him for his poor political judgement, he praises Porcari for believing in Petrarch's prophetic words.[41]

The most eloquent evidence that Machiavelli admired prophetic poetry comes in the closing exhortation of *Il Principe*, the alleged manifesto of his political realism. In announcing his own prophecy of the redemption of Italy he borrows Petrarch's verses: 'Virtù contro a furore / prenderà l'armi, e fia el combatter corto, / che l'antico valore / nelli italici cor non è ancora morto'.[42] The fact that Machiavelli closes *Il Principe* with the prophetic words of a poet reveals not only that he believed in the prophetic power of poetry, but also that he intended to announce, using a poet's words, a prophecy of redemption. Chapter XXVI of *Il Principe* is not an isolated episode in Machiavelli's intellectual and political trajectory. He continued to believe in the coming of a redeemer of Italy until the last days of his life, when he dedicated all his energies to the hopeless effort of preventing Italy from falling under the dominion of Charles V. On 15 March 1526, he wrote a letter to Guicciardini that reveals his hope that Giovanni de' Medici (Giovanni dalle Bande Nere) might be the hoped-for redeemer. Machiavelli wanted to believe in Giovanni's power to redeem Italy because he believed that at times God speaks through the voice of the people, who therefore have their own prophetic insights.[43]

This belief in the prophetic spirit of the people helps explain one further characteristic feature of Machiavelli's prophetic language: his repeated denunciations of Italy's corruption. He deprecates corruption not for the pleasure of denigrating his fellow Italians but in the hope that his words might advance the cause of moral and political redemption. He does not speak out of irrational fury or wounded pride but out of indignation. He says unpleasant things to his fellows, denouncing their faults and their neglected responsibilities, in order to call them to action. His reproaches are not intended to humiliate, or to emphasize his own moral superiority, but to elevate the soul of his people. Machiavelli speaks to excite in Italians the same passions that he feels, for he knows that uniting in opposition against oppression and corruption requires a shared love of liberty.

> La comune corruzione di tutte le città di Italia, magnifici Signori, ha corrotta e tuttavia corrompe la nostra città; perché, dappoi chè questa provincia si trasse di sotto alle forze dello imperio, le città di quella, non avendo un freno potente che le correggesse, hanno non come libere, ma come divise in sétte, gli stati e governi loro ordinati. Da questo sono nati tutti gli altri mali, tutti gli altri disordini che in esse appariscono. […] E veramente in nelle città d'Italia tutto quello che può essere corrotto e che può corrompere altri, si raccozza: i giovani sono oziosi, i vecchi lascivi, e ogni sesso e ogni età è piena di brutti costumi; a che le leggi buone, per essere dalle usanze cattive guaste, non rimediano.[44]

Machiavelli's voice becomes particularly severe when he condemns the religious corruption that the Church of Rome has fostered in the customs of the Italians.

> Per gli esempi rei di quella corte, questa provincia ha perduto ogni divozione e ogni religione: il che si tira dietro infiniti inconvenienti e infiniti disordini: perché, così come dove è religione si presuppone ogni bene, così, dove quella manca, si presuppone il contrario.[45]

While Italy's political redemption can be achieved only if God sends a redeemer, Italians can emancipate themselves from religious corruption by rediscovering the true founding principles of their religion. They must understand that Christianity, properly interpreted, demands that they love their country and be strong enough to defend it.[46] Machiavelli composed his *Discourses on Livy* in the hope that 'alcuno più amato dal cielo' might be capable of putting into effect his moral and political teachings.[47] When he wrote these words, Machiavelli most likely had *Paradiso* XVII in mind, where Cacciaguida reassures Dante that his outcry 'farà come vento, / che le più alte cime più percuote / e ciò non fa d'onor poco argomento' (*Paradiso* XVII. 133–35). Some years later, when Italy's fate had become apparent, Machiavelli still hoped for a future redemption.[48] Machiavelli's prophetic words did indeed inspire some of the noblest Italian minds, but he had to wait for more than three centuries, as we shall see below.

The impact of Machiavelli's realism

Examining the impact of Machiavelli's ideas on Italian political culture, it is clear that his presumed realism elicited more criticism than enthusiastic endorsements. Francesco Guicciardini, the undisputed master of political realism, considered Machiavelli too keen to generalize and too given to interpreting contemporary events through abstract models and examples from antiquity. In a letter from May of 1521, Guicciardini reproaches Machiavelli with gentle irony for his habit of discussing government under general headings, such as monarchy, aristocracy, and republic.[49] In his notes on the *Discourses on Livy*, he remarks that it is a mistake to cite continually the example of the ancient Romans, as Machiavelli so often did, because each situation is unique and contingent. Political decisions, Guicciardini maintains, should be reached not by looking at abstract models but by using *discrezione* (discretion), a highly refined form of political prudence that is not based on general rules, that cannot be learned in books, and that very few men have by nature or are able to attain through long practice.[50]

For Guicciardini, Machiavelli was too keen to suggest unconventional and risky courses of political action. In the midst of the dramatic political and military crisis of 1525– 27 that led to the sack of Rome, for instance, Machiavelli proposed to Guicciardini and Pope Clement VII to arm the people of Romagna and mobilize them against the invasion by Imperial troops. Arming the Romagnoli and organizing them into a militia, Guicciardini replied, would be 'una delle più utili e delle più laudate opere che Sua Beatitudine potessi fare', if only it were possible.[51] Given the conditions of the papal holdings in Romagna, it was, however, a very dangerous idea. The people of Romagna were torn by chronic political hostilities, and the Church had few reliable supporters. Those who wished to live happily and at peace disliked the Church because they wanted a government that would protect them; troublemakers and wicked men disliked the Church because they saw disorder and war as opportunities to settle accounts and further their own interests. Although Machiavelli's proposal was fascinating, it did not pass the scrutiny of a genuine political realist. As Roberto Ridolfi, the great biographer of Machiavelli and Guicciardini, pointed out, one should always read Machiavelli to find

insights about the future, and Guicciardini to understand what was really going on in the political life of their times.[52]

If we then turn to other certified advocates of political realism, we find that they are quite hesitant to acclaim Machiavelli as their patron saint. Gaetano Mosca, in his *Elementi di scienza politica*, for instance, maintained that *Il Principe*, while often hailed as an exemplar of the realist method, is in fact unworthy of the esteem in which it is held.[53] Another leading exponent of the realist school, Vilfredo Pareto, lavishes praise on Machiavelli in his *Trattato di sociologia generale*. Pareto, however, also notes that he never addressed the general and fundamental issues of sociology.[54] One keen admirer of Machiavelli's realism was Mussolini. As early as 1924, he delivered a keynote speech that launched a new interpretation of Machiavelli as the theorist of pure force. Mussolini begins his speech by reassuring his public that he is not speaking as an expert; his goal is the more modest one of presenting 'his own' Machiavelli. The *duce* then builds his argument on the premise that the author of *Il Principe* held a deeply grim view of human beings in general and of the Italians in particular. Since Machiavelli's time, moreover, Mussolini believed things in Italy had worsened further still. Italians, he notes, do all they can to avoid taxes, disobey the law, shirk their military duties, and pursue selfish pleasures. Liberal and democratic ideologies – with their much-vaunted principle of popular sovereignty – have dismally failed to resolve the conflict between citizens and the state. What was needed to remedy the Italian problem, in Mussolini's view, was not consent but force: the force of a prince who, like Machiavelli's armed prophet, can compel his people to believe. Having set things straight, Mussolini ended his speech with the assertion that 'the word *prince* must be taken to mean *state*: in Machiavelli's conception, the prince is the state'.[55]

Predictably, political theorists followed the *duce*'s lead, articulating more fully his vision of Machiavelli as a realist who had acknowledged the role of force in political action. Achille Norsa, for instance, maintained that Machiavelli's single greatest merit was to have discovered that 'force is the law of politics' and that strength is the only logic that makes human actions intelligible in the political sphere. By force, he meant force of will, determination to fight, and military organization. Norsa considered it a minor deficiency that Machiavelli had briefly believed that a courageous and fortunate prince could have saved Italy from the barbarians through individual effort. Similarly, it was an understandable moment of weakness on Machiavelli's part that the hardship of poverty had made him into a flatterer. But what really excited his intellect was his enquiry into the origin and affirmation of a strong will – how the personality of a leader can subordinate the will of the majority thanks to his virtue. This inclination inspired Machiavelli's admirable depiction of the new prince, the terrifying and grandiose figure that dominates the whole treatise. The new prince is the sole entity responsible for the future of his people; he is the only one who can, by an act of will, transform a multitude of dispersed men into a people, infusing it with a conscience, a soul, and moulding it into a political unity by transforming subjects into good soldiers. *Il Principe*, Norsa concluded, can be compared to the architectural masterpieces of an Alberti or a Bramante. Machiavelli's sincere patriotism, his biblical style, and the prophetic warmth of the exhortation in which he calls for a magnanimous prince to redeem Italy are for Norsa issues of secondary importance compared to his great discovery of the principle of force.[56]

Of all the realist tenets of Machiavelli's political theory, the one that has had the deepest and most lasting impact upon Italian political culture is surely the so-called principle of the autonomy of politics proposed by Benedetto Croce in 1925:

> Ed è risaputo che il Machiavelli scopre la necessità e l'autonomia della politica, della politica che è di là, o piuttosto di qua, dal bene e dal male morale, che ha le sue leggi a cui è vano ribellarsi, che non si può esorcizzare e cacciare dal mondo con l'acqua benedetta. È questo il concetto che circola in tutta l'opera sua, e che, quantunque non vi sia formulato con quella esattezza didascalica e scolastica che sovente si scambia per filosofia, e quantunque anche vi si presenti talvolta conturbato da idoli fantastici, da figure che oscillano tra la virtú politica e la scelleraggine per ambizione di potere, è da dire nondimeno concetto profondamente filosofico, e rappresenta la vera e propria fondazione di una filosofia della politica.[57]

Despite its illustrious advocates,[58] the view that Machiavelli deserves the credit for discovering the principle of the 'autonomy of politics from morals' is a distortion of his text. Supporters of the autonomy of politics thesis cite passages from Chapters XV–XVIII of *Il Principe*, in which Machiavelli asserts that a new prince must learn how not to be good and even how to enter into evil, if necessary. The problem with citing these passages as the foundation of the autonomy of politics is that Machiavelli here is referring not only to princes but to *all* human beings. The title of Chapter XV, which opens the entire discussion of politics and morals, is 'De his rebus quibus homines et praesertim principes laudantur aut vituperantur' ('Of those Things for which Men, and Particularly Princes, Are Praised or Blamed'). The end of Chapter XVIII, which concludes this section, also refers to all human beings: 'e *nelle azioni di tutti li uomini*, e massime de' principi, dove non è iudizio a chi reclamare, si guarda al fine'.[59] One might well argue that Machiavelli is claiming here that human beings cannot follow ethical principles in all circumstances but he does not assert that princes are above or below moral rules. Moreover, the assertion that actions should be judged by their end result also appears in Machiavelli's comedy *Mandragola*, where the actions in question are anything but political, and no princes are involved.[60]

The impact of Machiavelli's prophetic ideas

If we now examine the impact of Machiavelli's prophetic ideas, we note that they helped to shape the beliefs that inspired the intellectual leaders and the militants of the Risorgimento. To support this interpretation I have chosen two examples, one from the dawn, the other from the sunset of the Risorgimento. The first comes from Vittorio Alfieri (1749–1803) who stressed, in *Del principe e delle lettere*, that the religious reformation that paved the way for a lasting liberty for a number of peoples took the form of a return to origins akin to the one Machiavelli had written about:

> Ed in prova di quanto io dico, la stessa religione cristiana, anchorchè acerba nemica della gloria mondana, si vede pure essere ella stata, se non incitatrice di libertà, compatibile almeno con essa e con la felicità ed anche con una certa grandezza dei popoli in tutte quelle regioni ove ella veniva modificata alquanto, o, per dir meglio; ritratta verso i semplici suoi antichi principii. Il che vediamo tuttavia fra gli Svizzeri, gli Olandesi e gli Inglesi.[61]

In his concluding chapter, entitled, in a tribute to Machiavelli, 'Esortazione a liberar l'Italia dai barbari', Alfieri declares that Italy can have a future as a republic, which will allow it to

become free and great once again. The foundation of his prophecy is Machiavelli's argument that there is no reason, save for base cowardice, to believe that what has been done by men in the past is impossible for other men in the present to achieve, especially those of the same soil. Italy can rise again, if it is capable of rediscovering itself and returning to a life in accordance with the principles of the true Christian religion, just as other peoples have done after enacting religious reforms. Inspired by Machiavelli's ideas, Alfieri interprets the rebirth of a people as the rediscovery of a forgotten religious sentiment. He hands down this idea to succeeding generations that would become the protagonists of the Risorgimento.[62]

The finest example from the sunset of the Risorgimento comes from Francesco De Sanctis's *Storia della letteratura Italiana* (1870). For De Sanctis, Machiavelli attempted to revive the roots of the plant called 'man'.

> La serietà della vita terrestre, col suo istrumento, il lavoro, col suo obbiettivo, la patria, col suo principio, l'eguaglianza e la libertà, col suo vincolo morale, la nazione, col suo fattore, lo spirito o il pensiero umano, immutabile ed immortale, col suo organismo, lo stato, autonomo e indipendente […] Muore la scolastica, nasce la scienza. Questo è il vero machiavellismo, vivo, anzi giovane ancora. È il programma del mondo moderno, sviluppato, corretto, ampliato, più o meno realizzato. E sono grandi le nazioni che piú vi si avvicinano. Siamo dunque alteri del nostro Machiavelli. Gloria a lui, quando crolla alcuna parte dell'antico edificio. E gloria a lui, quando si fabbrica alcuna parte del nuovo. In questo momento che scrivo, le campane suonano a distesa, e annunziano l'entrata degli italiani a Roma. Il potere temporale crolla. E si grida il viva all'unità d'Italia. Sia gloria al Machiavelli.[63]

Another text that indicates the impact of Machiavelli's prophetic ideas on the Risorgimento is Oreste Tommasini's *La vita e gli scritti di Niccolò Machiavelli nella loro relazione col Machiavellismo* (1883–1911).[64] For Tommasini, one of Machiavelli's most closely held aspirations was the *risorgimento* ('resurrection' or 'rebirth') of faith after a religious reform, achieved by any means possible.[65] Machiavelli was free of any theological preconceptions and believed that divinity should be honoured through one's works, an idea he shared with Cromwell, Robespierre, Garibaldi, Mazzini, and the American nation.[66]

I shall conclude with some examples of the impact of Machiavelli's prophetic language on that other Italian experience of political emancipation: the anti-Fascist resistance. For symmetry's sake I shall again discuss an example from the dawn and an example from the sunset of the *Resistenza*. The first is Piero Gobetti (1901–26), who claimed that the true Machiavelli was not a pure technician of government, but the prophet who stated that God commands us to love liberty, inspires the founders of religions and good political orders, and lives in Christ, the 'creatore di politica libertà'.[67] Machiavelli's God was the cornerstone of Gobetti's religion of liberty that he hoped would inspire a people of citizens to fight for liberty because they must, and not because they are sure of victory. A religion that is 'non più conforto per i deboli ma sicurezza dei forti, non più culto di un'attività trascendente, ma attività nostra non più fede ma responsabilità'.[68]

After the *Resistenza* was over, Luigi Russo, a historian of Italian literature, published a book on Machiavelli, which he dedicated to the anti-Fascist martyrs Nello Rosselli and Leone Ginzburg. In it Russo claimed that political action that becomes prophetic and poetic in order to redeem peoples and found states is not in fact antithetical to the politics that Machiavelli had theorized, but rather a truer expression of his ideas. After a

cold dissertation on the arts of the lion and the fox, at the end of *Il Principe*, he steals the colours, the images, and the style of his much satirized adversary, Savonarola, and speaks as a prophet himself, describing such biblical notions as a sea that has parted, a cloud that showed the path, a stone that has poured forth water, the heavens that have rained down manna, and calling to his aid the voice of a poet.[69]

Machiavelli, Russo concludes, was a prophet because he knew that 'senza pathos profetico, senza rinnovamento morale, senza coscienza civile, anche il principato machiavellico è destinato a restare un'utopia'.[70] If the story I have told teaches us anything, it is that Machiavelli's prophetic message has helped Italians to achieve political liberty. On the other hand, when they have interpreted him as a pure realist, they have lost their liberty and have plunged into political and moral corruption.

Notes

1. A survey of the authors who have claimed that Machiavelli was a realist would fill a volume. The most influential studies on this subject have been, in my opinion, Friederich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of 'Raison d'état' and its Place in Modern History* [1924], trans. by Werner Stark (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957); Benedetto Croce, *Elementi di politica* (Bari: Laterza, 1925); Jack H. Hexter, *The Vision of Politics on the Eve of the Reformation: More, Machiavelli, and Seyssel* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Gerhard Ritter, *The Corrupting Influence of Power* [1948], trans. by Fredrick W. Pick (Hadleigh, Essex: Tower Bridge, 1952). On Machiavelli as a realist in the sense of scientific realism it is still worth reading the words of Ernst Cassirer: 'What Galileo gave in his *Dialogues*, and what Machiavelli gave in his *Prince* were really "new sciences". Just as Galileo's Dynamics became the foundation of our modern science of nature, so Machiavelli paved a new way to political science', Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1946), p. 130. On the same subject see Herbert Butterfield, *The Statecraft of Machiavelli* (London: Bell, 1940); Leonardo Olschki, *Machiavelli the Scientist* (Berkeley, CA: Gillick Press, 1945); Augustin Renaudet, *Machiavel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955); Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Machiavelli Anticristo* (Rome: Gherardo, 1954). In more recent years, John Najemy has maintained that Machiavelli 'is uncompromising in his insistence that imagination and truth can indeed be differentiated, and that *he* will speak on the basis of truth alone', Najemy, *Between Friends: Discourses of Power and Desire in the Machiavelli–Vettori Letters of 1513–1515* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 188 (emphasis in original); but see also pp. 58–71 and 185–201.
2. Paolo Polizzotto has rightly stressed that 'prophecy had long been a feature of Florentine life' and to the city's view of itself by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Polizzotto, 'Prophecy, Politics and History in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence: The Admonitory Letters of Francesco d'Antonio de' Ricci', in *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein*, ed. by Peter Denley and Caroline Elam (London: Westfield College, University of London, Committee for Medieval Studies, 1988) pp. 107–31 (p. 107). See also Stéphane Toussaint, 'Profetare alla fine del Quattrocento', in *Studi Savonaroliani*, ed. by Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Florence: SISMEL, 1996), pp. 167–81; Cesare Vasoli, 'L'attesa della nuova era in ambienti e gruppi fiorentini del Quattrocento, in *L'attesa dell'età nuova nella spiritualità della fine del medioevo* (Todi: Accademia Tudertina, 1962), pp. 340–432; Vasoli, 'L'influenza di Gioacchino da Fiore sul profetismo italiano della fine del Quattrocento e del primo Cinquecento', in *Il profetismo Gioachimita tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento*, ed. by Gian Luca Podestà (Rome: Marietti, 1991), pp. 61–85. The classic studies of prophecy in the Middle Ages and Renaissance are Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*: *A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); and Lorenzo Polizzotto,

The Elect Nation: The Savonarolan Movement in Florence 1494–1545, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

3. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Opere*, ed. by Corrado Vivanti, 3 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1997–2005), I, 159 (*Il Principe*, XV. 1).
4. 'Io non mi vergogno parlare con loro [*sc.* gli antiqui uomini], e domandarli della ragione delle loro azioni', Machiavelli, *Opere*, ed. by Vivanti, II, 296 (Letter to Francesco Vettori, 10 December 1513).
5. Ibid., II, 257.
6. Ibid., I, 166 (*Il Principe*, XVIII. 6).
7. Ibid., I, 517 (*Discorsi*, III. 43. 1).
8. Ibid., II, 137 (Letter to Giovan Battista Soderini, 13–21 September 1506).
9. Felix Gilbert, 'Florentine Political Assumptions in the Period of Savonarola and Soderini', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 20, no. 3–4 (1957), 187–214.
10. Machiavelli, *Opere*, ed. by Vivanti, II, 287.
11. Ibid., II, 332-33 (Letter to Vettori, 10 December 1514).
12. 'Abbiamo fatto cercare delle *Vite* di Plutarco, e non se ne truova in Firenze da vendere. Abbiate pazienza, ché bisogna scrivere a Venezia', ibid., II, 53 (Letter from Biagio Buonaccorsi, 21 October, 1502).
13. Ibid., II, 336 (Letter to Vettori, 10 December 1514).
14. Ibid., II, 269 (Letter from Vettori, 12 July 1513).
15. Ibid., II, 253 (Letter to Vettori, 29 April 1513).
16. Ibid., I, 179 (*Il Principe*, XXI. 1).
17. Ibid., II, 774 (Diplomatic letter, 26 December 1502).
18. Ibid., I, 136–37 (*Il Principe*, VII. 7).
19. Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire, ou métier d'historien* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1952).
20. Machiavelli, *Opere*, ed. by Vivanti, II, 137 (Letter to Soderini, 13–21 September, 1506); cf. ibid., I, 448–49 (*Discorsi*, III. 9. 1).
21. Ibid., I, 12.
22. See ibid., I, 130–33 (*Il Principe*, VI).
23. Scholars have rather focused on the 'providential' content of Chapter XXVI of *Il Principe*, in particular after Mario Martelli's essay 'Da Poliziano a Machiavelli: Sull'epigramma *Dell'Occasione* e sull'occasione', *Interpres*, 2 (1979), 230–54. See also, by Martelli, 'La logica provvidenzialistica e il capitolo XXVI del *Principe*', *Interpres* 4 (1981–1982), 262–383; and 'Firenze', in *Letteratura italiana: Storia e geografia,* ed. by Alberto Asor Rosa (Turin: Einaudi, 1988), II. 1 (*L'età moderna*), 132–40; Gennaro Sasso, 'Il *Principe* ebbe due redazioni?', *La Cultura*, 19 (1981), 52–109; Sasso, 'Del ventiseiesimo capitolo del *Principe* della provvidenza e di altre cose', *La Cultura*, 22 (1984), 249–309; Sasso, 'Sul ventiseiesimo del *Principe*: L'uso del Petrarca', *La Cultura*, 23 (1985), 183–215; Ferdinando Bausi, 'Petrarca, Machiavelli, il *Principe*', in *Niccolò Machiavelli politico storico letterato*, ed. by Jean Jacques Marchand (Rome: Salerno, 1997), 41–58; Hans Baron, 'The *Prince* and the Puzzle of the Date of Chapter 26', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 21 (1991), 84–102. On Machiavelli's understanding of religion in general, see Cary G. Nederman, 'Amazing Grace: Fortune, God and Free Will in Machiavelli's Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60 (1999), 617–39; Marcia L. Colish, 'Republicanism, Religion and Machiavelli's Savonarolan Moment', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60 (1999), 597–616.
24. Miguel Vatter, 'Machiavelli, "Ancient Theology", and the Problem of Civic Religion', in *Machiavelli on Liberty and Conflict*, ed. by Nadia Urbinati and Camila Vergara (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017), pp. 113–36.
25. Ibid., p. 125.
26. In Machiavelli, *Opere*, ed. by Vivanti, II, 190 (Letter from Casavecchia, 17 June 1509).
27. Ibid., II, 189.
28. On Machiavelli and Savonarola see: Donald Weinstein, 'Machiavelli and Savonarola', in *Studies on Machiavelli*, ed. by Myron P. Gilmore (Florence: Sansoni, 1972), pp. 253–64; Alison Brown, 'Savonarola, Machiavelli and Moses: A Changing Model', in *Florence and Italy*, ed. by Denley

and Elam, pp. 57–72; Mario Martelli, 'Machiavelli e Savonarola: Valutazione politica e valutazione religiosa', in *Girolamo Savonarola: L'uomo e il frate*, ed. by Enrico Menestò (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1999), pp. 121–59; Mark Jurdjevic, *A Great and Wretched City: Promise and Failure in Machiavelli's Florentine Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Alison McQueen, 'Politics in Apocalyptic Times: Machiavelli's Savonarolan Moment', *Journal of Politics*, 78 (2016), 909–24.

29. Machiavelli, *Opere*, ed. by Vivanti, II, 8.
30. Ibid., I, 97–98. (*Decennale primo*, 154–65).
31. Ibid., III, 67 (*L'Asino*, V. 108–11).
32. 'Creder che sanza te per te contrasti / Dio, standoti ozioso e ginocchioni, / ha molti regni e molti stati guasti. / E' son ben necessarie l'orazioni: / e matto al tutto è quel ch'al popol vieta / le cerimonie e le sue divozioni: / perché da quelle in ver par che si mieta / unione e buono ordine, e da quello / buona fortuna poi dipende e lieta'. Ibid., III, 67–68 (*L'Asino*, V. 115–23).
33. Ibid., II, 372.
34. Ibid., II, 287 (Letter to Vettori, 26 August 1513).
35. ibid., I, 132–33 (*Il Principe*, VI. 6).
36. Ibid., I, 492 (*Discorsi*, III. 30. 2).
37. Ibid., I, 492–93 (*Discorsi*, III. 30. 3).
38. Ibid., I, 230 (*Discorsi*, I. 11. 3).
39. Ibid., III, 613 (*Istorie fiorentine*, VI. 29).
40. Ibid.
41. 'Ibid., III, 614 (*Istorie fiorentine*, VI. 29).
42. Ibid., I, 192 (*Il Principe*, XXVI. 5; quoting Petrarch, *RVF* 53. 93–96).
43. Ibid., I, 318 (*Discorsi*, I. 58. 2).
44. Ibid., III, 429 (*Istorie fiorentine*, III. 5).
45. Ibid., I, 233 (*Discorsi*, I. 12. 2).
46. Ibid., I, 334 (*Discorsi*, II. 2. 2).
47. Ibid., I, 327 (*Discorsi*, II. proem. 3).
48. For example, 'questa provincia pare nata per risuscitare le cose morte, come si è visto della poesia, della pittura e della scultura'. Ibid., I, 689 (*Dell'arte della guerra*, VII. 7).
49. Ibid., II, 377 (Letter from Guicciardini, 18 May 1521).
50. Francesco Guicciardini, *Considerazioni intorno ai 'Discorsi' del Machiavelli*, in Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, ed. by Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), pp. 521–84 (p. 544).
51. In Niccolò Machiavelli, *Legazioni e commissarie*, ed. by Sergio Bertelli, 3 vols (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964), III, 1570 (Letter from Guicciardini to Cesare Colombo, 23 June 1525).
52. See Roberto Ridolfi, *Vita di Niccolò Machiavelli*, ed. by Giuseppe Cantele (Rome: Castelvecchi, 2014), pp. 477–83.
53. Gaetano Mosca, *Elementi di scienza politica* [1896], in *Scritti politici*, ed. by Giorgio Sola, (Turin: UTET, 1982), pp. 549–50, 598, 780–81.
54. Vilfredo Pareto, *Trattato di sociologia generale*, 2 vols (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1964), II, 487–88.
55. Benito Mussolini, 'Preludio al Machiavelli', *Gerarchia*, 3 (1924), 205–09.
56. Achille Norsa, *Il principio della forza nel pensiero politico di Machiavelli* (Milan: Hoepli, 1936), pp. 35–38, 45, 47.
57. Benedetto Croce, 'Elementi di politica [1925]', in *Etica e politica*, 3rd edn (Bari: Laterza, 1945), p. 251.
58. As well as Croce, see, for example, Federico Chabod, 'Del *Principe* di Niccolò Machiavelli [1925]', in *Scritti su Machiavelli* (Turin: Einaudi, 1993), pp. 99–100.
59. Machiavelli, *Opere*, ed. by Vivanti, I, 166–67 (emphasis added).
60. 'Oltra di questo, el fine si ha a riguardare in tutte le cose'. Ibid., III, 167 (*La mandragola*, III. 11).
61. Vittorio Alfieri, *Del principe e delle lettere con altre prose di Vittorio Alfieri* (Florence: Barbèra, Bianchi, 1859), pp. 233–34.

62. Ibid.
63. Francesco De Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana,* ed. by Niccolò Gallo, 2 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), II, 606–07.
64. Oreste Tommasini, *La vita e gli scritti di Niccolò Machiavelli nella loro relazione con il machiavellismo*, 3 vols (Rome: Loescher, 1883–1911).
65. Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli's God* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 284–85.
66. Ibid., p. 285.
67. Piero Gobetti, 'La filosofia politica di Vittorio Alfieri', in *Opere complete di Piero Gobetti*, 3 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1960–74), II: *Scritti storici, letterari, e filosofici*, ed. by Paolo Spriano (1969), 129.
68. Ibid., II, 132.
69. See Luigi Russo, 'Il Machiavelli profeta della indipendenza e dell'unità nazionale', in *Machiavelli* [1945], 2nd edn (Bari: Laterza, 1966), pp. 203–13.
70. Ibid., p. 14.